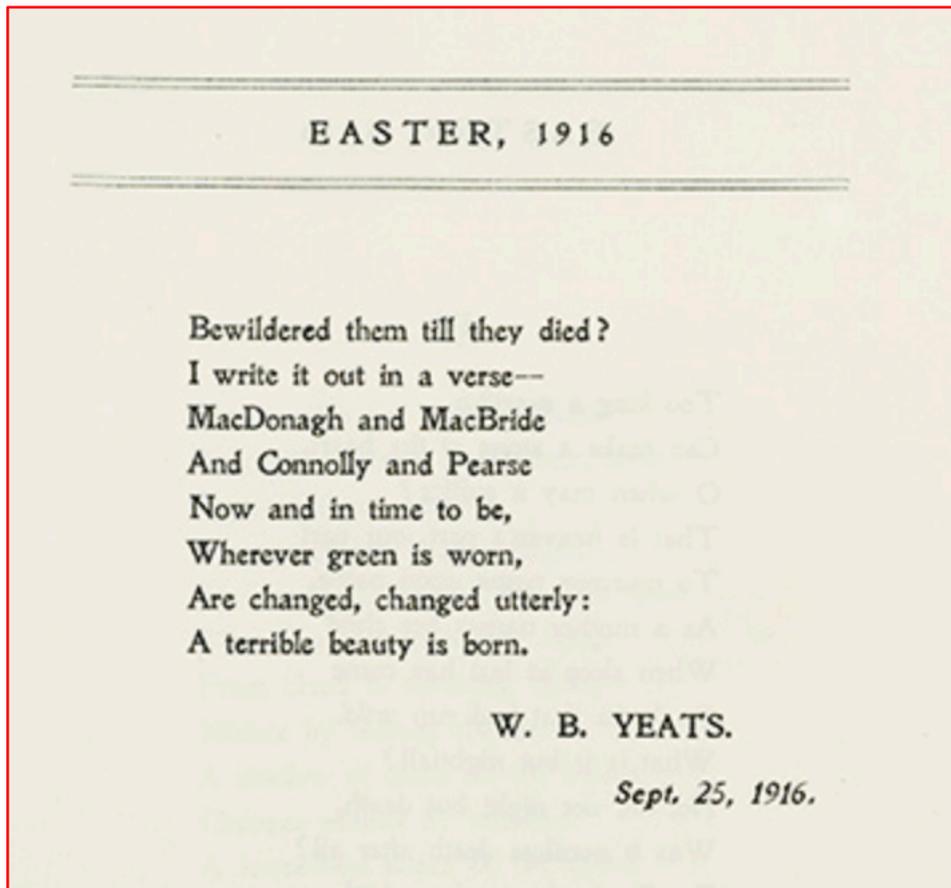
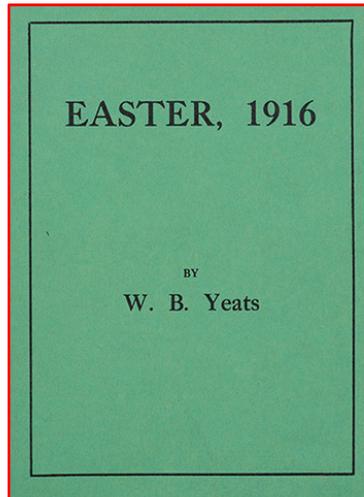


William Butler Yeats
"Easter, 1916"



Above: Green front cover and, afterwards, final lines of the original printing of William Butler Yeats's poem, "Easter, 1916"

Here is the standard version of the poem. Ensure that you have looked up and understand the meaning of the terms highlighted in yellow.

Easter, 1916

Stanza #1 begins (line 1)

1 I have met them at close of day
2 Coming with vivid faces
3 From counter or desk among grey
4 Eighteenth-century houses.
5 I have passed with a nod of the head
6 Or polite meaningless words,
7 Or have lingered awhile and said
8 Polite meaningless words,
9 And thought before I had done
10 Of a mocking tale or a gibe
11 To please a companion
12 Around the fire at the club,
13 Being certain that they and I
14 But lived where motley is worn:
15 All changed, changed utterly:
16 A terrible beauty is born.

Stanza #2 begins (line 17)

17 That woman's days were spent [Constance Markievicz
18 In ignorant good will,
19 Her nights in argument
20 Until her voice grew shrill.
21 What voice more sweet than hers
22 When young and beautiful,
23 She rode to harriers?
24 This man had kept a school [Patrick Pearse
25 And rode our wingèd horse.
26 This other his helper and friend [Thomas MacDonagh
27 Was coming into his force;
28 He might have won fame in the end,
29 So sensitive his nature seemed,
30 So daring and sweet his thought.
31 This other man I had dreamed [John MacBride
32 A drunken, vain-glorious lout.
33 He had done most bitter wrong
34 To some who are near my heart,
35 Yet I number him in the song;
36 He, too, has resigned his part
37 In the casual comedy;
38 He, too, has been changed in his turn,
39 Transformed utterly:
40 A terrible beauty is born.

Stanza #3 begins (line 41)

41 Hearts with one purpose alone
42 Through summer and winter, seem
43 Enchanted to a stone
44 To trouble the living stream.
45 The horse that comes from the road,
46 The rider, the birds that range
47 From cloud to tumbling cloud,
48 Minute by minute change;
49 A shadow of cloud on the stream
50 Changes minute by minute;
51 A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
52 And a horse plashes within it
53 Where long-legged moor-hens dive,
54 And hens to moor-cocks call.
55 Minute by minute they live:
56 The stone's in the midst of all.

Stanza #4 begins (line 57)

57 Too long a sacrifice
58 Can make a stone of the heart.
59 O when may it suffice?
60 That is heaven's part, our part
61 To murmur name upon name,
62 As a mother names her child
63 When sleep at last has come
64 On limbs that had run wild.
65 What is it but nightfall?
66 No, no, not night but death;
67 Was it needless death after all?
68 For England may keep faith
69 For all that is done and said.
70 We know their dream; enough
71 To know they dreamed and are dead.
72 And what if excess of love
73 Bewildered them till they died?
74 I write it out in a verse—
75 MacDonagh and MacBride
76 And Connolly and Pearse
77 Now and in time to be,
78 Wherever green is worn,
79 Are changed, changed utterly:
80 A terrible beauty is born.

September 25, 1916

...

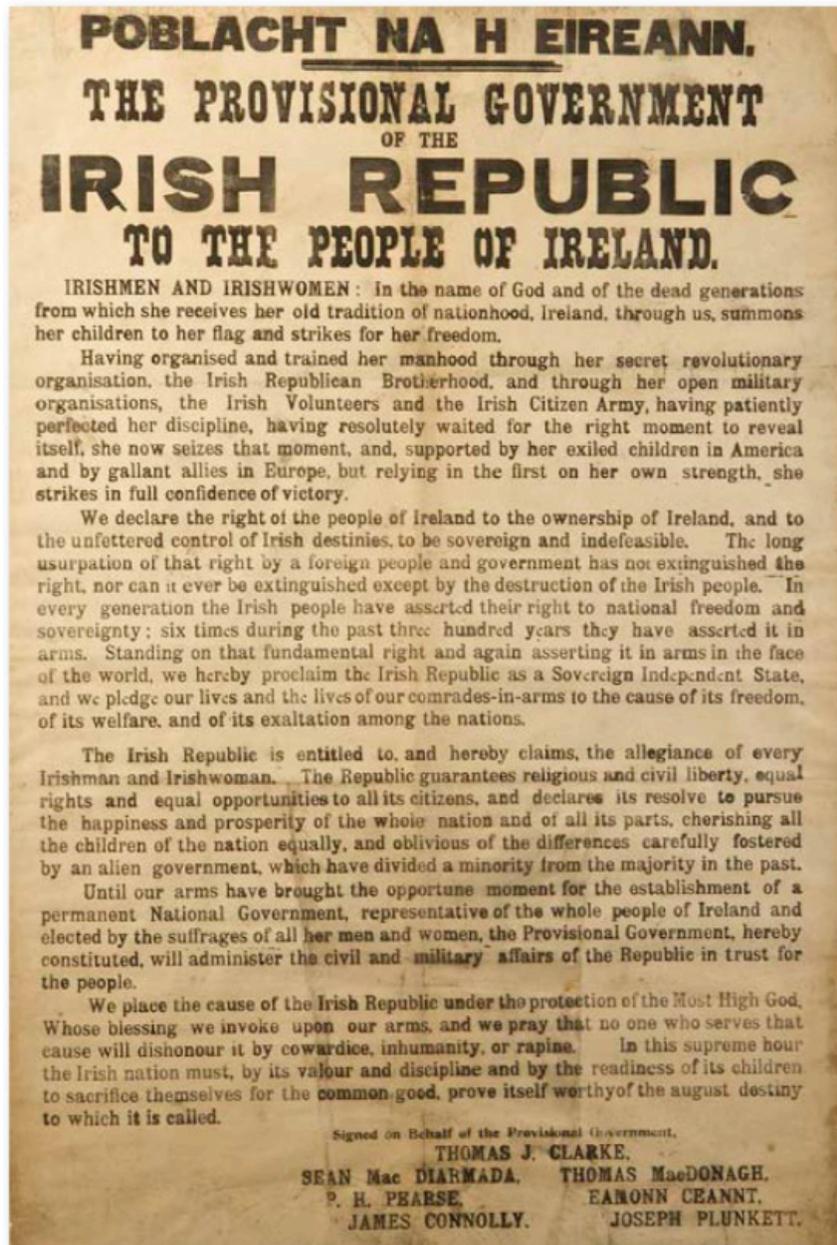
William Butler Yeats “Easter, 1916”

As a means to better understand “Easter, 1916,” let’s read Sections I and II of “Shades and Angels 1916-1917,” which is Chapter 2 of the second and final volume of Roy F. Foster’s authorized biography, *W.B. Yeats: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2003). An Irish academic based at the University of Oxford in the UK, Foster had unparalleled access to Yeats’s papers. Here are some preliminary notes to help make Foster’s argument clearer.

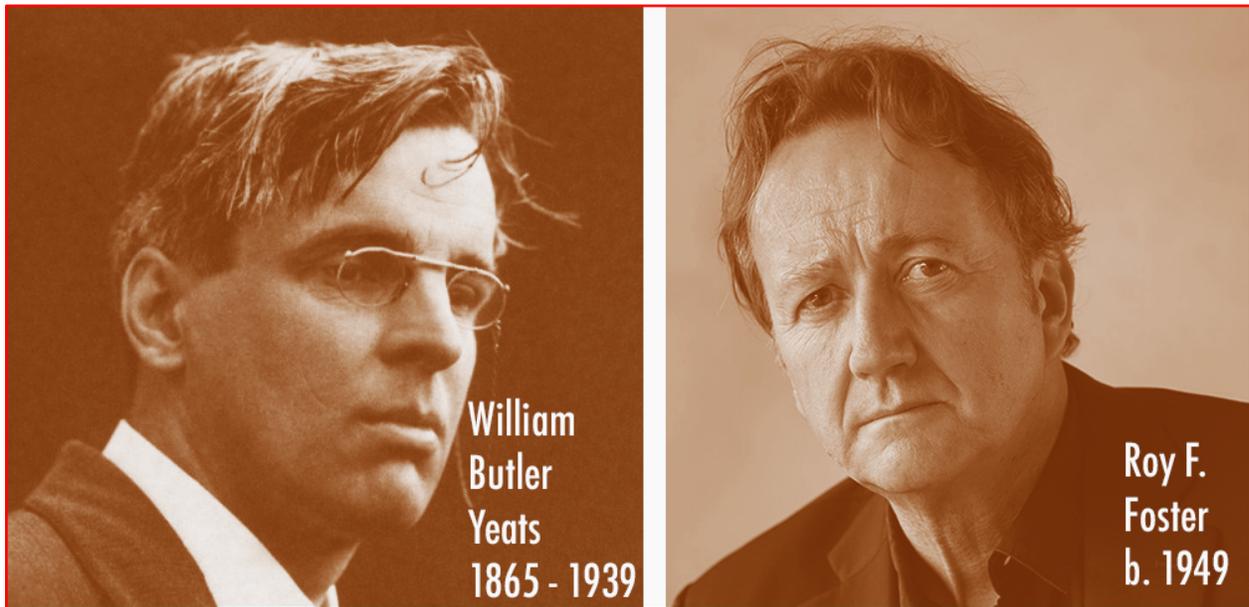
- In the chapter, Foster uses “WBY” to refer to William Butler Yeats.
- **John Redmond** (first mentioned on p. 44) was a leading Irish nationalist politician who, controversially, urged Irish men to sign up for and serve in the British army, as volunteer soldiers, during the **Great War** (World War I).
- The **Irish Republican Brotherhood** (p. 44) — also known as the IRB or **the Fenians** — was one of the main Irish revolutionary organizations. Foster indicates that “a dissident IRB wing” (45) was responsible for pushing ahead with the Easter 1916 Rising, beginning on **Easter Monday (April 24th) of 1916**. Within that group, a key leader was **Patrick Pearse** (p. 44), a lawyer-turned-teacher who founded and ran a progressive school for boys: **St. Enda’s** (p. 46). During the Rising, Pearse served as the chief rebel commander, and he was among the first three of the **16 rebel leaders executed** by the British between May and August of 1916.
- **Lady Augusta Gregory** (p. 45) was an Irish nationalist — a Protestant, like Yeats — who joined Yeats and others in founding and running **the Abbey Theater** (a national theater for Ireland) and who mentored Yeats’s literary career, opening to him her country-house estate, **Coole Park**, near the village of **Gort, in County Galway**, in the rural west of Ireland.
- Although it changed later, **Sinn Féin** (“Ourselves”) at the time of the Rising was an Irish-nationalist political party, led by **Arthur Griffith**. Its goal was an independent Irish republic. While the British authorities blamed it for masterminding the Rising, it was not, in fact, involved.
- **Lolly** (Elizabeth) and **Lily** (Susan) (p. 45) were Yeats’s two sisters; they operated an **Arts and Crafts** manufacturing business (Cuala [pronounced “cool-a”] Industries) in Dublin, which included a printing press (Cuala Press). Yeats also had a brother, a highly accomplished painter and illustrator, whom Foster refers to as “Jack.”
- **Maud Gonne** (p. 46) was one of Yeats’s major love interests. She married **John MacBride**, who participated as a rebel-leader in the Easter 1916 Rising and was among the 16 leaders that the British executed (in his case, on May 5, 1916). He appears in Yeats’s poem as a **“drunken, vain-glorious lout.”** Prior to her marriage, Maud Gonne gave birth to a daughter, **Iseult**, who was 21 and living in France at the time of the Easter 1916 Rising. During her marriage, Maud Gonne gave birth to a son: **Seán MacBride**.
- The **Gaelic League** (p. 46) was (and remains) a cultural-nationalist organization dedicated to reviving the Irish language (**Gaeilge**) as Ireland’s everyday tongue. Patrick Pearse became prominent in the Gaelic League.
- **James Connolly** (p. 46) was a trade-union leader who helped organize a trade-union militia, the **Irish Citizen Army**. During the Easter 1916 Rising, it participated alongside:
 - the **Irish Republican Brotherhood** or **Fenians** (a secret, oath-bound physical-force-nationalist organization);
 - the publicly visible **Irish Volunteers**, a nationalist militia (that split from the pro-John Redmond National Volunteers);
 - **Cumann na mBán** (“Women’s Council”), an all-woman nationalist militia.
- **Roger Casement** (p. 46) was the sixteenth and final rebel to be executed (hanged) by the British: on August 3, 1916. An internationally famous human-rights campaigner, he was arrested on the west coast of Ireland for illegally running guns into the country from Germany. Casement is the main focus of page 52.
- The **Home Rule Bill** (p. 51) was a proposal — and then a statute — to give Ireland a parliament of its own: that is, to afford the country a large measure of self-government within the United Kingdom. Due to the outbreak of the Great War, the plan was frozen.

- The **Lane pictures** (p. 64) are an important collection of Impressionist paintings (many by French artists) that Lady Gregory and Yeats campaigned to have housed in Dublin. They claimed that that site, rather than the National Gallery in London, was the preference of the paintings' late owner, Hugh Lane (Lady Gregory's nephew). Foster suggests that Yeats delayed general publication of "Easter, 1916" in case its content would alienate the British authorities with whom he and Gregory were negotiating with the goal of securing the Lane paintings for Dublin.

...



Above: A copy of the Proclamation (versus Declaration) of the Irish Republic, hurriedly printed before the Easter 1916 Rising. During the event, Patrick Pearse as rebel commander read the text from the front portico of the General Post Office in central Dublin, a strategically important building that the rebels commandeered as their headquarters.



Here is a brief overview of the Easter 1916 Rising, adapted from an original article by John Dorney.

The Easter Rising was a brief, unsuccessful insurrection, mostly in Dublin city, that lasted from **April 24th** until **April 30th, 1916**. The insurgents in Dublin amounted to 1,200 men and women from the **Irish Republican Brotherhood** (IRB or Fenians), plus three nationalist militias: the **Irish Volunteers** (which had split from the pro-John Redmond National Volunteers); the **Irish Citizen Army**, a socialist trade union group; and **Cumman na mBán** (“Women’s Council”), a women’s group. The aim was to terminate colonialism — the centuries-long political subjugation of Ireland by the British crown — and establish a **sovereign Irish republic**.

Why did the **National Volunteers not participate**? Over 120,000 strong and led by the Irish Parliamentary Party’s chief, **John Redmond**, the National Volunteers had pledged themselves to support the British and the other allied powers in the **Great War** (World War I). Although dedicated to Irish independence, over 30,000 National Volunteers joined the British Army. The remaining 13,000 Irish Volunteers, led by **Eoin MacNeill**, believed that **“England’s difficulty”** — i.e. the challenges of fighting a world war — was **“Ireland’s opportunity”** for creating an independent republic.

Deeming themselves a **“Military Council,”** seven men planned the Easter 1916 Rising in secret. For the most part, they were members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. They were: Patrick Pearse; Thomas MacDonagh; Tom Clarke (a veteran Fenian); Sean McDermott; Joseph Mary Plunkett; Éamon Ceannt; and James Connolly (leader of the Irish Citizen Army).

The IRB’s Military Council had arranged for **German firearms and munitions** to be delivered on Good Friday, April 21st, 1916; however, the British discovered the shipment off the coast of County Kerry in southwest Ireland. At the venue (**Banna Strand**), they intercepted and arrested the IRB-associated rebel most responsible for the gun-running: **Roger Casement**. After the Easter 1916 Rising, Casement would be the last of the 16 rebel leaders that the British executed. Yeats wrote a poem about these nationalist martyrs: **“Sixteen Dead Men.”**

Due in part to the Casement's arrest on Banna Strand, the leader of the Irish Volunteers, Eoin MacNeill, tried to call off the rebellion, originally scheduled for Easter Day (Sunday, April 23rd) — a gesture to the **symbolism of rising from the dead** (Christ on the first Easter; Ireland, it was hoped, in 1916).

Specifically, MacNeill issued a **"countermanding order"**; however, the ultimate outcome was just the postponement of the rebellion by a single day, to Easter Monday, April 24th, 1916. The insurgents occupied strategically significant buildings around Dublin, not least: the **General Post Office** (GPO); the Four Courts; the South Dublin Union (a workhouse for the poor); St. Stephen's Green (a public park); Boland's Mill (a manufacturer of flour); and Jacob's Biscuits (a manufacturer of crackers and cookies). From their headquarters, the GPO on **Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street)**, the rebels dispatched Patrick Pearse to read publicly the **Proclamation of the Irish Republic**. Pearse occupied the role of the sought-for republic's President; James Connolly occupied that of its Commander in Chief.

During the ensuing days, the British deployed over 16,000 troops and artillery pieces, including a naval gunboat, in Dublin to suppress the Rising. Across the week of fighting, about 450 people were killed and over 2,000 wounded, **mostly civilians**. With the GPO bombarded, Patrick Pearse **surrendered** on Sunday, April 29th, 1916. The fiercest fighting took place not at the GPO but, rather, other Dublin locations, including: Mount Street Bridge; North King Street; and the South Dublin Union. Some risings occurred elsewhere in Ireland, most notably in: **County Galway**; the town of **Enniscorthy** in County Wexford; and the town of **Ashbourne** in County Meath.

Of the 16 rebel leaders executed, 15 of them died in a two-week period after the surrender. Casement's execution occurred in August. During and soon after the Rising, the British arrested over 3,000 and imprisoned over 1,400 people. Neither Dublin's citizens nor John Redmond's mainstream-nationalist Irish Parliamentary Party supported the Rising; however, **public opinion shifted in the rebels' favor** for a variety of reasons, foremost among them being the 16 executions. In the years that followed, the **Sinn Féin ("Ourselves")** organization, which had not participated in the Easter 1916 Rising, changed to become the principal political party advancing the rebels' aims and legacy. It fundamentally altered Ireland's political landscape by eviscerating the Irish Parliamentary Party in the **General Election of 1918**, shortly after which the broad-based, guerrilla-style **Irish War of Independence** began.

Chapter 2 : SHADES AND ANGELS

1916–1917

The Irish are essentially a dramatic people as the French are, as the English and Germans are not. When Mr W. B. Yeats created the Irish Theatre it was with an almost uncanny knowledge of the needs and capacities of the Irish.

Daily Chronicle on the Easter Rising, 9 May 1916

I

ON 15 APRIL 1916 Elizabeth Asquith organized what sarcastic observers described as a ‘seance’ in aid of charity: poets, including WBY, read their work to a paying audience of 400 in a hall off Piccadilly. The occasion was chaired by Augustine Birrell, the literary-minded chief secretary of Ireland, who for most of the event ‘sat with his head buried in his hands’.¹ Within ten days, he would bury his head from more than mere embarrassment. On Easter Monday, April 24, a group of Irish Republican Brotherhood revolutionaries led by WBY’s old adversary Patrick Pearse marched into Dublin and took possession of several central locations – notably, the General Post Office in O’Connell Street. Dublin Castle had heard of plans for an impending Fenian coup with German aid but had thought the enterprise aborted or postponed – as, indeed, it was, at least in its original form. Those who led the doomed ‘Rising’ were opposing their own leadership, and knew they represented a minority of a minority. They were, however, possessed by a transcendent Pearsean idea: in taking arms, they would redeem Ireland’s ‘soul’ from the compromises and collaborations of the constitutional movement, and confront the ancient oppressor on the field of battle.

This *démarche* failed to address the real reason why independence had not been granted, but it reflected discontent with Redmond’s pro-war stance, as the conflict dragged on, and also disillusionment at the postponement of Home Rule for the war’s duration. The rebels were further frustrated by Unionist Ulster’s refusal to agree a *modus vivendi* with Home Rule triumphant – an intransigence encouraged by the apparent inability of Asquith’s government to cut the Gordian knot. The war had strengthened the Unionist hand; it had also presented the IRB strategists with a traditional opportunity to strike in Britain’s hour of need. But their counsels were divided, and the cataclysm burst on Dublin from an apparently clear sky.

There had nonetheless been rumbles offstage, relayed to wBY in London. From the summer of 1915 Gregory had heard rumours of rebel encampments in the Galway hills, drilling by night, and preparations ‘to fight the English’.² As the fear of conscription mounted, she had learned from her housekeeper that ‘reservists in Limerick are deserting to America, afraid of going mad as some have done by all the horrors of the war. The [missioners], as you know, are emphasising these, as an illustration of the torments of hell. I think Redmond’s difficulty will be getting the priests to support him, and he certainly won’t get many of the farming class to go.’ She also attributed the fomenting of discontent to Sinn Féin, led by the Abbey’s ancient enemy Arthur Griffith, and denounced their local representatives as ‘corner boys’. wBY, always politically interested, had noted in November 1915 that the atmosphere in Dublin had turned antagonistic, reflected in the probable reaction of the Abbey audience to a viceregal visit: ‘our Pit in which all the ancient suspicions are alive again in all probability will either desert the theatre or boo the viceroy’. A month later he told Gregory that nationalists were now interfering with the mail of well-known Unionist sympathizers, like the land commissioner and Abbey trustee W. F. Bailey.³ But neither he nor Gregory, in common with the doomed Birrell and most of the Irish population, expected the Rising to happen as and when it did.

Misinformation was general. Griffith in fact had opposed the idea of a Rising, as had the Volunteer leader Eoin MacNeill, and been kept in ignorance; the leadership came from a dissident IRB wing, not from Sinn Féin as such. But as Dublin blazed, and troops were hastily poured in to douse the conflagration, wBY was reliant on rumour, speculation, and what letters could get through to London. He heard the news when staying at Oakridge, Will Rothenstein’s idyllic farmhouse overlooking a Cotswold valley near Stroud; strangely, his sister Lolly was also marooned in Gloucestershire, spending Easter with Sir William Wedderburn a few miles away. ‘How many years will Ireland take to recover?’ she wrote in her host’s visitor-book. ‘The bitterness on both sides will be hard to bear.’⁴

For the transfigured participants, Easter Week ‘seemed one long, sleepless, fantastic space of time fused into one’;⁵ but observers saw it differently. Bitterness at what appeared a wanton and destructive assault indeed dominated the initial reactions of the Yeats circle. ‘Did you ever hear or know of such a piece of childish madness – clever children – there is not one person in the whole of Ireland that is not the worse for this last fortnight’s work,’ Lily wrote to Quinn.⁶ Gregory too, who was friendly with both Birrell and his under-secretary, Sir Matthew Nathan, initially blamed the event on Sinn Féin. But both she and wBY were shocked by the fact that several of the leaders had been personally known to them. Pearse, after early attacks

on their theatre, had come to admire their work (and WBY allowed St Enda's School to act his plays for nothing); Thomas MacDonagh, the critic and university lecturer, had dedicated a book of poems to WBY; Joseph Plunkett came from an affluent nationalist family well known in Dublin cultural circles. Constance Markievicz had been a figure in WBY's life since his Sligo youth, much though he disapproved of her later incarnation as the most strident of republican socialists. Several Abbey and Cuala employees turned out to have been involved as well. So, notably, did Maud Gonne's estranged husband, John MacBride.

By 1916 WBY's ideological and political disagreement with such people was clear-cut: he had disassociated himself from Pearse's politics on a public platform, and written scathingly of the mystical schoolteacher and his Gaelic League colleague Eoin MacNeill as 'flirting with the gallows-tree'. As for Griffith, he was 'a mischievous personality & better out of the country'.⁷ As Pound put it to Quinn, WBY had 'said for years that Pearse was half-cracked and that he wouldn't be happy until he was hanged. He seemed to think Pearse had Emmet mania, same as some other lunatics think they are Napoleon or God.' Pound looked forward wolfishly to 'chaffing Yeats about the Dublin Republic. He dont like republics. He likes queens, preferably dead ones, but he has been out of town for three days and I shall assume that he was at Stephen's Green.'⁸

In fact, when WBY returned from the Cotswolds his mood was cautious. He wrote to Lolly:

I am writing for news of the Abbey & shall not go over unless it has been burned or badly damaged. There is nothing to be done but do one's work & write letters. That 'introduction' [to Pound's *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*] by the by is somewhere in the post on its way to Dundrum.

I know most of the Sinn Fein leaders & the whole thing bewilders me for Conolly is an able man & Thomas MacDonough both able & cultivated. Pearse I have long looked upon as a man made dangerous by the Vertigo of Self Sacrifice. He has moulded himself on Emmett.⁹

To St John Ervine of the Abbey he wrote about ten days later: 'I have been a good deal shaken by Dublin events – a world one has worked with or against for years suddenly overwhelmed. As yet one knows nothing of the future except that it must be very unlike the past.'¹⁰

When WBY visited Ricketts four days after the Rising, his host noted his 'strange Irish impartiality' on the subject, 'as it was all a sort of game'. Following this cue, the artist assured him 'that a paternal government would discover that Roger Casement was insane, imprison the leaders during the war pending the investigations over the extent of German intrigues in the

matter, discover that these men were misguided dupes, and probably amnesty them after the war'.¹¹ But this is exactly what did not happen. All WBY could rely on was reports from Ireland, in newspapers or – more vividly and influentially – from friends; and through these the shift of opinion can be gauged, as the government declared martial law and began to execute the rebel leaders after brief trials for treason. Damning anecdotes also began to circulate about the behaviour of the security forces, notably the murder of the pacifist Francis Sheehy Skeffington, a popular Dublin figure, well known to the Yeats circle. As news seeped out, it was relayed to WBY through a series of letters from Gregory in Galway – long, urgent, and intense. These swayed many of his own reactions. If a letter from Gonne supplied the central idea that 'tragic dignity had returned to Ireland', his changing sense of what the rebellion represented followed the trajectory traced out in his correspondence with Coole.

In the immediate aftermath of the Rising, Gregory, reporting on 27 April, was still distracted by accounts of guns landed at Kinvara, armed men marching by night, barricades and encampments cutting off Gort from Galway. But she also astutely anticipated what would happen in Dublin. 'It is terrible to think of the executions or killings that are sure to come,' she wrote to WBY, 'yet it must be so – we had been at the mercy of a rabble for a long time, both here and in Dublin, with no apparent policy, but ready to take any opportunity of helping on mischief.' As the executions were carried out, however, Ascendancy prejudices were sapped by doubts and regrets. On 7 May she heard that MacBride had been executed,

the best event that cd. come to him, giving him dignity – And what a release for her! a smoothing away of confusion, which I have come to think is the worst thing that can come into any body's life – Perhaps I think it because now that the railways are mended, & the barricades on the Galway road have been thrown down, papers & letters of the last fortnight are rushing in, & we had learned to do so well without them . . . I am sorry for Pearse & McDonnough [*sic*], the only ones I knew among the leaders – they were enthusiastic –¹²

A week later, with the news of more executions, her thoughts had crystallized further.

Thank you for your letter & the papers – I haven't looked at them yet, but they wouldn't make any difference – because my mind is filled with sorrow at the Dublin tragedy, the death of Pearse & McDonough, who ought to have been on our side, the side of intellectual freedom – & I keep wondering whether we could not have brought them into that intellectual movement – Perhaps those Abbey lectures we often spoke of might have helped – I have a more personal grief for Sean Connolly, [the Abbey actor] who I had not only admiration but affection for – He was shot on

the roof of the City Hall – there is no one to blame – but one grieves all the same – It seems as if the leaders were what is wanted in Ireland – & will be even more wanted in the future – a fearless & imaginative opposition to the conventional & opportunist parliamentarians, who have never helped our work even by intelligent opposition – Dillon just denounces us about Playboy in his dull popular way.¹³

The ‘papers’ which WBY had sent her included the current *Westminster Gazette*, which carried an antagonistic analysis of the Irish political outlook. Gregory preferred to take her position on a text from the Coole library, which was calculated to appeal strongly to WBY too – Shelley’s political testament.

I have read those papers you sent, but they are hardly worth considering, in questions like this one must go to one’s own roots – I think Shelley right & that he goes to the roots when he says we know so little about death that we have no business to compel a person to know all that can be known by the dead . . . to punish or reward him in a manner & a degree incalculable and incomprehensible by us – And he says what is very applicable to this moment Persons of energetic character, in whom as in men who suffer for political crimes, there is a large mixture of enterprise and fortitude & disinterestedness, and the elements, though misguided & disarranged, by which the strength & happiness of a nation might have been cemented, die in such a manner as to make death appear not evil but good – the death of what is called a traitor, that is, a person who, from whatever motive would abolish the government of the day, is as often a triumphant exhibition of suffering virtue as the warning of a culprit –¹⁴

She went on to remark that the government would ‘suffer for the stupidity’ of giving over their own business to soldiers, though she inveighed against ‘armed bullies’ and ‘village tyrants’, and felt that the military authorities were taking a carefully lenient line with ‘terrorizing gangs’ in the country at large. As often before, her attitude towards the world that centred on Gort was notably less nationalistic than her stance in Abbey matters. And here, she regretted that St John Ervine was about to produce *The Playboy of the Western World*, which Sinn Féin had attacked nine eventful years before.

On the other hand, what I am rather upset by today, is the putting on of ‘Playboy’ at this moment – Our managers have shirked it for years – now it seems as if we were snatching a rather mean triumph in putting it forward just as those who might have attacked it are dead or in prison – I don’t know if this is folly, & I suppose we can’t remonstrate with Ervine anyhow for fear of shaking his nerves – But I don’t like it – And I wish we could have won that ‘enterprise & fortitude and disinterestedness’ to our side – I believe we should have done so but for the rising –

‘I see the whole affair through as it were two glasses,’ she confessed to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt in late May. ‘I don’t know if [the executions] were

necessary from an English point of view – probably they were – But I grieve, because these men were more akin to us than the politicians, or the Ancient Order of Hibernians – I knew MacDonagh – Pearse a little – John [Eoin] MacNeill (being tried today 23rd) I knew & liked & respected – They were all enthusiasts, brave, sincere – Beside them we seem a little insincere, we have all given in to compromise –¹⁵ She signed a circular letter of sympathy for James Connolly’s family organized by AE, though she worried it was too sympathetic ‘to what he considers Sinn Féinism’:¹⁶ her own view of the movement continued to be considerably less benign. But the individual heroes, more and more clearly seen as martyrs, were another matter. A terse letter from Edward Martyn (who had spent Easter Week trapped in his Leinster Street house, saved from starvation by food from the Kildare Street Club) said what many were feeling: ‘I am as well as a man can be who has had a lot of his friends executed & deported.’¹⁷ While the ambivalence caught in Gregory’s letters persisted, Dublin’s literati were shocked by the immediacy of what had happened: people they had known with familiarity, and even regarded with contempt, had joined, at a stroke, the mythic company of Emmet, Fitzgerald, Tone. Whatever was felt about Sinn Féin’s political programme (let alone that of the IRB), the contempt WBY had expressed in ‘September 1913’ rang hollowly now. The ‘romantic Ireland’ of O’Leary’s sacrificial nationalism had returned from the grave.

Further barometric readings might be taken from Lily’s letters, the only member of the family to be in Dublin for the Rising. Before the executions had completely run their course, she was as caustic as ever:

What a pity Madame Markiewicz’ madness changed its form when she inherited it. In her father [Sir Henry Gore-Booth, the Arctic explorer] it meant looking for the North Pole in an open boat, very cooling for him and safe for others. Her followers are said to have been either small boys or drunken dock workers out of work, called the citizens army. I don’t think any others could have followed her. I would not have followed her across a road. I often heard the elder Pearse speak at his school prize days and such things. I thought he was a dreamer and a sentimentalist. MacDonagh was clever and hard and full of self conceit. He was I think a spoilt priest.

Maud Gonne is at last a widow, made so by an English bullet. It must have been some humorist who got him the post of water bailiff to the corporation.¹⁸

In early May, MacBride’s drunkenness, MacDonagh’s egocentricity, Pearse’s impracticality, Markiewicz’s eccentricity could all still be seen as material for a good Dublin story. But Lily’s subsequent reaction to the government’s draconian policy was stupefaction, followed by fury. ‘This whole work here is so horrible I hate to write of it, this shooting of foolish idealists, not a vicious man among them except perhaps MacBride, Maud Gonne’s

husband.’ By mid May she thought the situation ruled out any possible accommodation with Britain: it had been a catalogue of folly and blunder. ‘We can never understand each other. I felt like that when I was a girl and an Englishman wanted me to have him. I felt we could never understand each other. He would have thought he understood me the whole time, which would have been maddening, I cannot believe they make good colonist[s], it is impossible.’¹⁹

Among all wBY’s friends the reaction was the same. Pound, who had begun by seeing the Rising merely as something to ‘give that country another set of anecdotes to keep it going another hundred years’, was among the most vehement. ‘Damn it all the government, i.e., the executive, must *know*. I mean they must understand *why* things happen if they are to act intelligently. In the case of the Irish outbreak they didn’t know. Nobody seems to have known. Yeats certainly didn’t know. He thought as Birrell thought, that it was all fireworks.’²⁰ By 29 May, W. K. Magee noted that ‘the barbarities of the military and chivalrous conduct of the insurrectionists are the universal topic in AE’s circle’. Opinions were setting towards radical nationalism, and only ‘the aegis of Plunkett’s respectability’ kept even the saintly AE out of hot water.²¹ Out of fury at the government’s ineptness, a slow recognition began to stir: that what had happened might be, in Lily’s words, ‘the beginning of Ireland’. The shock of the executions was followed, as her sister put it, by ‘a queer undercurrent of excitement everywhere – not expressed – but there nevertheless’. By the end of June, AE judged ‘Ireland a political corpse with lively atoms: a disintegration before a new synthesis’.²²

II

wBY’s reactions developed against this background of echoes from Ireland. He started like Gregory, from a point of distinct antipathy to the Sinn Féin ideologues who were generally supposed to have planned the Rising. In January 1916 Arthur Griffith’s latest newspaper, *Nationality*, attacked wBY as an ‘imperialist’ who had ‘gone over to the enemy’: ‘a poseur in patriotism precisely as Chesterton is a poseur in Catholicism’. This was the issue that reprinted AE’s sharp parody of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, first published at the time of the *Playboy* riots:²³ the reverberations of those old battles never fell quite silent. Nor were wBY’s opinions of Pearse, MacDonagh, Markievicz, and MacBride substantially different from those retailed by Lily, before her change of heart; he told Ricketts that Ireland was ‘like a man diseased who can only think of his disease’, obsessed by ‘the folly of one idea’.²⁴ By 11 May, however, the news of the executions and ‘many miscarriages of justice’

preoccupied him. Disturbed and ill, he kept largely to Woburn Buildings, too unwell to attend the funeral of Mabel Beardsley on 10 May, and worriedly seeking consultations through Elizabeth Radcliffe with her spirit instructors.²⁵ He was also in more prosaic communication with Gregory. Not all of his letters survive, but on 11 May he wrote of his ‘sorrow and anxiety’ at seeing so many of their colleagues and acquaintances undergoing imprisonment and worse, while the political outlook – so optimistic before the war – was uncertain and gloomy.

If the English conservative party had made a declaration that they did not intend to rescind the Home Rule Bill there would have been no rebellion. I had no idea that any public event could so deeply move me – & I am very despondent about the future. At this moment I feel that all the work of years has been overturned, all the bringing together of classes, all the freeing of Irish literature & criticism from politics. Maud Gonne reminds me that she saw the ruined houses about O’Connell St & the wounded & dying lying about the streets, in the first few days of the war. I perfectly remember the vision & my making light of it & saying that if a true vision at all it could only have a symbolical meaning. This is the only letter I have had from her since she knew of the rebellion. I have sent her the papers every day. I do not yet know what she feels about her husband’s death. Her letter was written before she heard of it. Her main thought seems to be ‘tragic dignity has returned to Ireland.’ She had been told by two members of the Irish Party that ‘Home Rule was betrayed.’ She thinks now that the sacrifice has made it safe.²⁶

Already, however, Maud Gonne’s comment that the rebels had ‘raised the Irish cause again to a position of tragic dignity’ was working in his mind. ‘I am trying to write a poem on the men executed – “terrible beauty has been born”.’

By 23 May, sending Quinn the typescript of *Reveries* in accordance with the arrangement worked out to support JBY, WBY could describe the late rebels as ‘the ablest & most fine natured of our young men’. He also confessed a desire to return to Dublin to live, ‘& begin building again’, despite the fact that he had extended his empire in Woburn Buildings to the floor below. His letters to Quinn also show that he was increasingly preoccupied by an issue close to the lawyer’s heart too: the cause célèbre gathering around the figure who would become the last of the Easter martyrs – Roger Casement.²⁷

Casement was a uniquely dashing figure. Born to an Irish Protestant background, he had entered the consular service and become celebrated (or execrated) for revealing the horrific exploitation of South American Indians in the rubber trade and of native workers in the Belgian Congo. His conversion to Irish nationalism rapidly followed, and he had pursued the cause with characteristic impetuosity: after the outbreak of war he had tried to

recruit a revolutionary force for Fenian purposes from Irish prisoners of war in Germany. This enterprise resoundingly failed in its set purpose, but succeeded in establishing him in the eyes of British officialdom as the worst kind of traitor. Casement's general lack of success in galvanizing a decisive level of German support for Irish revolution convinced him that the Rising must be cancelled. Ironically, he had landed secretly in County Kerry to advocate caution but was arrested. His trial, and condemnation to death, took place in July. At once a strong campaign was set in motion, led by several prominent Irish people such as Bernard Shaw – no friend to Sinn Féin but convinced that Casement did not deserve the death penalty.

The condemned man had not been part of WBY's circle; only a few months before, Gregory had written to WBY wondering who Casement was. WBY was, nonetheless, brought on board for the campaign, though he preferred to pursue it his own way. When Eva Gore-Booth, Constance Markievicz's sister, wrote to him in late July asking for his support, he replied from Gonne's Normandy house that he had already written to the home secretary, with a copy to Asquith. In fact, he sent a cable to the prime minister the following day, pleading clemency for Casement. The case was, WBY felt (and told Quinn and Eva), overwhelmingly strong. But already the waters were being muddied. Members of the government were attempting to defuse the campaign for clemency by circulating portions of Casement's alleged diaries, which obsessively recounted homosexual exploits on his travels abroad. WBY would not learn of this whispering campaign until much later, but it certainly produced the desired effect in some quarters, and Casement was hanged on 3 August. The hangman remembered him as 'the bravest man it fell to my unhappy lot to execute'.²⁸

WBY's reply to Eva, expressing sympathy for the trouble brought to them by Constance's arrest and imprisonment, strikes an anticipatory echo of a poem written much later: 'Your sister & yourself, two beautiful figures among the great trees of Lissadell, are among the dear memories of my youth.'²⁹ The tension of the politically charged summer after the Rising and the executions was translated, almost at once, into creative energy. He was not alone in this: AE swiftly wrote his 'Salutation' to the dead rebels and circulated it privately, while WBY's old acquaintance from Dublin, Dora Sigerson, married to the editor of the *Sphere*, Clement Shorter, was working on the verses which would be printed as *Poems of the Irish Rebellion, 1916* and sent to WBY later that year. (Two were about Casement; one was called 'Sixteen Dead Men'.)

As early as 1 May, H. W. Nevinson's account of a conversation with WBY at the Kardomah Café shows that the images of his poems about 1916 were building up:

Talked the whole time about the Irish Sinn Fein rising: does not know Casement personally: deeply laments part of other leaders – James Connolly (who as half-hearted working man could be easily deceived by vague hopes & promises), the Countess whom he knew with her sister as the toasts of Sligo, beautiful as gazelles, Pearse that schoolmaster who ran the model lay-Catholic school . . . & especially MacDonagh: a professor of literature & author of an excellent book on English prosody: thought MacNeill realised the folly & tried to stop it at last moment: supposed they had expected a German landing, or were otherwise deceived: had heard nothing about the Skeffingtons: said he went on with his writing & other work every day through all the stress and turmoil: was anxious to hear whether the Abbey Theatre was burnt down.³⁰

On 23 May WBY told Quinn he was ‘planning a group of poems on the Dublin rising but cannot write till I get into the country’. He had already accumulated enough poems before the Rising to make the Macmillan edition of *Responsibilities* far more substantial than the Cuala version of two years before: he was even keeping back poems to provide a brand-new small book for Cuala the following winter. This would become *The Wild Swans at Coole*. But the poetic energy infused by the Rising would take him in a different direction, and publishing the work which it inspired raised more difficult questions yet.

He had, moreover, still not been to Dublin since the cataclysm a month before. But he could not postpone it for ever, and in late May he was summoned firmly by Gregory to come back and put ‘new life’ into the stricken Abbey.³¹ The players were furiously opposed to St John Ervine’s dictatorial ways; ‘cocksure and ill-mannered and thick-skinned’, as Lily put it, he had tried to sack several actors for refusing to rehearse two plays a day and then tried to impose his wife as a leading actress. But here too post-Rising trauma had exacerbated matters. Arthur Sinclair, one of those dismissed, declared that the company also disapproved of Ervine (an Ulster Unionist) ‘dabbling in politics’, and the players rebelled openly on 29 May. Ervine remained for some weeks, but by early July Gregory was determined that he must go, and that WBY must sack him ‘as you engaged him’.³² Ervine was forced to resign; after Ezra Pound was briefly floated as his successor, J. Augustus Keogh was appointed, on the firm understanding that Gregory and WBY were the sole directors (‘which seems to have slipped from peoples’ minds’) and kept entire control over all dramatic and artistic matters. Had Pound actually been appointed, there would certainly have been problems on this score, since at this very moment he was embroiled in a savage quarrel with his publisher Charles Elkin Mathews over the alleged obscenity of the poems in his forthcoming collection, *Lustra*. Though WBY manfully weighed in on his side, quoting Donne to the effect that ‘a man ought to be

allowed to be as indecent as he liked', this would not have augured well for the sensibilities of Dublin audiences.³³

Moreover, Irish public opinion was now poised on a hair-trigger over issues even more explosive than sexual frankness. On his visit during the first week of June, WBY stayed in the Stephen's Green Club, and surveyed the wreckage of much of the city centre; he needed a pass from the Dublin Metropolitan Police to travel even as near as Greystones, just outside the city on the Wicklow coast, where Jack was recovering from his nervous breakdown. All in all it was a sobering visit, dominated by talk about the late Risings; but it helped fix in WBY's mind the idea of irrevocable change as a subject for his own poetic commentary. 'He is writing a series of poems on things here,' Lily told Quinn.³⁴ The correspondence with Gregory had taken him back, not only to his abiding love of Shelley, the eternal revolutionary, but to his own memories of the '98 centennial organizations, and the row over the *Playboy* when he had apparently watched 'the dissolution of a school of patriotism that held sway over my youth'.³⁵ The Irish earthquake entailed a reckoning with his past, and particularly with those elements from which he had thought himself liberated. Since the news of MacBride's execution his thoughts (as his letter of 11 May shows) had been with Gonne; he swiftly decided to spend the summer in France. Gregory was disappointed, 'for I feel the need of a talk with you, a new beginning as it were'. But, for WBY, Gonne's changed position after MacBride's death meant a new beginning too. He had discussed with Gregory in Dublin his intention to travel to France and propose marriage once more. The day after he left his old friend wrote resignedly, 'Coole seems lonely without the certainty of your summer here . . . I hope all may go well with you whatever happens.'³⁶

He had already consulted another, equally inevitable oracle: a few days after MacBride's execution he was sending urgent letters to Elizabeth Radcliffe. There were sessions on 14 and 17 May. WBY wrote, as a query to Radcliffe's 'Instructors' (but hidden from the medium), 'should I marry MG. Is this the torches splendour.' The answer was vague enough: 'Not misjudged. Meeting point abridged.'³⁷ But it was enough to send him to France with Iseult, who had been staying in London, on 22 June.

The atmosphere at Gonne's seaside house in the aftermath of the Rising is best conveyed by a letter from WBY to his old friend Florence Farr, now terminally ill in Ceylon.

I am writing in France, where I am staying with Maude Gonne . . . She belongs now to the Third Order of St Francis & sighs for a convent. She & her family are returning to Ireland in October. When she heard the news of her husband's execution she went to Iseult, paper in hand & looking pale and said 'MacBride has been shot' & then went to her little boy who was making a boat & said 'your father has died for

his country – he did not behave well to us – but now we can think of him with honour’ and then said to Iseult ‘Now we can return to Ireland’. Thereon a hanger on, a Miss Delaney began ‘May a soul of an English man be lost for every hair upon his head’ and the like till Iseult took her by the shoulders & shook her and said ‘Delaney this is nonsense’ & then Delaney wept & said ‘You have no heart’.³⁸

This account must have been relayed to WBY by Iseult. The year before, trying to encourage her translations of Tagore into French, WBY had ruefully concluded ‘she is too young and beautiful to be industrious’.³⁹ But for about three years she had been sending WBY letters mingling self-doubt and self-dramatization, thanking him for caring whether ‘I am going to waste sordidly my life in futility or to make a great task of it.’⁴⁰ She appealed for advice, railed against the ennui of life, and between the lines gave him news of Maud. But by late 1915 she was making it clear that her reliance on him extended beyond ancient family friendship. ‘You are the only person who has encouraged me to work, in the real sense of the word. You are the person in whose mind I trust and believe in most.’ She sent him her efforts at writing, which he closely criticized; she poured out her exasperation with her mother, whose powerful character and dramatic way of life perhaps accounted for many of Iseult’s insecurities. Now twenty-one, she was lazy, neurotic, and beguiling: despite her haunting beauty, she was touchingly awkward (at six feet tall), shy, and increasingly dependent on WBY. Their relationship had been considerably strengthened by her visit to London in May, to try to arrange a passport which would enable her mother to travel to Ireland. WBY had taken her around the salons of his friends, and to the opening of Rothenstein’s exhibition at the Leicester Gallery, where she had been much noticed. Her looks had attracted the attention of admirers as diverse as G. B. Shaw, W. T. Horton, and Ezra Pound: on a visit to Stone Cottage both Dorothy Pound and George Hyde Lees were struck by her originality and distinction, set off by a charming Franco-Irish accent.⁴¹

By 1916 her interests had moved on to the new generation of French Catholic poets – Francis Jammes, Paul Claudel, and Charles Péguy, whose *Le Mystère de la charité de Jeanne d’Arc* was Iseult’s latest translation project (doomed, like much else in her life, to remain unfinished). WBY proclaimed his interest in her was avuncular at most, but his friends were interrogating him closely about it: histrionic and nonchalant by turns, Iseult was already affecting the world-weary sarcasm which WBY had found appealing in Olivia Shakespear. In London she had told WBY she would ‘bring him back to Colleville with her’;⁴² and even though WBY accompanied her to France, in order to propose to her mother, Iseult’s presence provided a powerful secondary reason. When he duly asked Maud to marry him, and

was duly refused, his thoughts shifted with surprising speed to her daughter. A long letter to Gregory made this unabashedly clear.

I have little to report. I asked Maude to marry me, a few days ago. She said that it would be bad for her work & mine, & that she was too old for me. 'I have been always ten years older than you. I was when we were both twenty & I still am.' Next day she said 'were you not very much relieved that I refused you?' & then 'I dare say it would be better for the children if we married but I do not think it would work'. Perhaps she was hesitating, perhaps not. I have not returned to the subject and she has not. I think she would find it hard to give up politics & I have given her a written statement of my political creed. Probably she has finally decided. She says 'I have always thought a woman of my years should not marry.' I am very much taken up with Iseult, not in the way of love or desire, but her joyous childhood absorbs my thought, & I hardly know what I feel. It makes Madam Gonne seem older than she is. Should my feeling change towards Iseult I shall leave at once, as I think 30 years too great a difference for her happiness, but I have little fear. I am more & more convinced of her genius. I find the little boy attracts me too. He is very gentle & well bred & intelligent – rather a surprize to me. Every one is indeed peaceful & gentle. Madam Gonne helps the servant with the housework in the morning & spends her afternoon drawing flowers. She does nothing with these drawings, but packs them away in portfolios, or loses them. Today she eat her lunch with a bird in a cage on the table beside her. The little boy had his white rabbit beside him. We have three & thirty singing birds, a green Parrot, a white Japanese cock which perches on the back of our chairs at lunch, two dogs, two guinea pigs, two rabbits & a black Persian cat. Our one anxiety is how we are to limit Iseults ciggarettes.⁴³

The denial that 'love or desire' came into his feelings for Iseult is unconvincing. It was also disingenuous to describe someone approaching her twenty-second birthday as a 'joyous child'; writing to Maud in May, he had remarked that Iseult was 'quite a commanding person now, no longer a fanciful child'. In any case, Gregory was not taken in, quickly replying:

I am relieved on the whole – I was growing more & more doubtful of the possibility of its going well – it sometimes seemed as if it wd separate you from the Ireland you want to work for [rather] than bringing you nearer – As to the other matter I dont think the difference of age an objection, you are young in appearance & in mind & spirit – she may look on you as but a family friend – but I have always thought it possible another feeling might awake & in that case I see no reason why happiness might not come of it –⁴⁴

WBY may have been influenced by this explicit encouragement. He stayed on into the summer, lulled and magnetized again by the world Gonne created wherever she went. But it was the lure of Iseult's company, rather than her mother's political fixation, that bound him to the large house on the bare Normandy beach. After that summer, Iseult would write to him: 'I wish we

were both on the shore now, outlining pentagrams in the sand, counting on our fingers 12345 (5 was the right number I think), seeing some yellow come into the sky and our shadows lengthen and discussing with the greatest seriousness whether the sea could really be paler than the sky and what we should say when we came in late for dinner.⁴⁵ She conjured up intimacy; they discussed their respective tendencies to depression, and he taught her mantras to induce resignation. By mid August he could write to Gregory a much fuller account of the developing relationship, though he still presented his role as that of a therapeutic presence in the life of a difficult child, in conflict with an equally difficult mother.

I think by your silence that you may blame me for staying on here – & I know that my last letter was not quite candid – there are things it is easier to say. However that is only a conventional idea. I am staying on here for the sake of that young girl, in whom we are both interested. (I will not give the name to a possible censor). To look at her dancing on the shore at the edge of the sea or coming in with her arms full of flowers you would think her the most joyous of creatures. And yet she is very unhappy – dying of self-analysis. Everything becomes food for an accusation on sin. Last night we had a painful scene. ‘I hear a voice always’ she said ‘saying “worthless, worthless, worthless”’. A moment ago she brought in a pack of cards & asked me to keep it & never let her have it again. She has been accustomed to play ‘patience’ after lunch in her room, & Maud Gonne has very probably made a sin of it – there has been a contest of will over it. Yet the worst is not these definite sins (‘Patience is sensuality’ she says in her quaint English) but metaphysical sins – she has not enough love for God & enough love for others & so on. And then there is the real trouble of ciggarettes – she is getting nicotine poisoning, & Maud Gonne by allowing the little boy to taunt her constantly about it at meals (till I stopped that) has armed the craving against her reason. She put that matter in my charge, & now after some rebellions she seems to be really trying to conquer the craving herself. I am dealing with the metaphysical sins in a way I learned from you. ‘If you do not love so & so enough, do something for them, sacrifice something & you will love them.’ Maud Gonne has feared she was going into melancholia, & supports my belief that I can do more for her than others & so I stay on. My own relation with her is now perfectly candid. She is really a child & when she trusts trusts comple[te]ly. She has told me that when she was in Dublin four years ago – the time you met her – she wished to marry me (‘You were the only person of my own race I had met’ she means the only person of culture) & that she had this wish for two years. She has shown me in her diary such sentences as ‘I have an affection for him; he has, I think, an affection for me’ (I had given her books since she was a child) and a record of a conversation, in which I said I would like, if I married, to live in some out of the way place like Bayeux in an old house. She took this quite seriously & chose the house at Bayeux. This thought lasted two years, & then she made up her mind she was not in love, & that perhaps she would fall in love with someone of her own age. I need hardly say that I told her that she might marry me if she would & that there were

exceptional cases where even 30 years difference would not prevent happiness. We discussed it nearly without emotion as we might any other problem – her usual analysis – ‘Ah if you were only a young boy’ she said & I left it there & am now established not as husband not as father (though she rejects the word ‘father’ which has I imagine no very pleasant associations). She has grown to be a great beauty & has had many proposals and so is all quite natural. She says however ‘do not tell Lady Gregory that it is quite certain I am not going to marry you for if you do she will not be kind to me’. I think my own feelings are those of kindness & affection, natural to my years.⁴⁶

This time, Gregory’s reply took a firmer line. She now understood his ‘apparent indifference to Ireland after your excitement after the rising’, but he must come back and bring his great weight of cultural influence to bear on the unrest and discontent. ‘There is nowhere for the imagination to rest – but there must be some spiritual building possible just as after Parnell’s fall, but perhaps more intense, & you have a big name among the young men – I daresay your being away & having time for thought & your thinking of the ’98 time may be all a help in the end.’⁴⁷

At the end of August WBY wrenched himself away from the caged singing birds, the wide beach, kite-flying with Seán, and Iseult’s seductive moodiness; her mother’s passport had finally come through, but would permit her to travel to England only. He arrived back in London on the 31st. On 15 September he went to Dublin, where he met Gregory to attend the Abbey’s first production of *John Bull’s Other Island*, which Shaw had mischievously written to launch their theatre so many years before. The next day they proceeded straight to Coole.⁴⁸

There he stayed until early October. He wrote to Iseult asking if she was ‘too young to know what a test of affection letters are’; she replied ‘now I am in great gloom and oppressed by that old sense of sinking and failure. You are one of the very few whose thought brings me a life giving power.’⁴⁹ She also told him how much she had missed him during the early autumn at Colleville; they were soulmates, and he was the voice of her daimon. Her long letters employed a romantic shared language, and repeated the rules of life and thought she had learned from him. ‘Only the fool or the saint can stand serene amid the discordance of modern civilisation, for the first is part of it and the other stands above.’⁵⁰ If she was in part testing her own sexual powers upon her legendary mother’s famous admirer, she was also expressing an intoxicating dependence on him. He was deeply affected. And, as always, romantic excitement fuelled his imaginative powers. At Coole, on 25 September, he finished the poem on the Rising which he had been meditating upon since May, and writing in Colleville. In a provisional contents page for *The Wild Swans at Coole* (where it did not appear) he placed

it first – with the bare title ‘1916’. But it was first published, to a privately circulated audience, as ‘Easter, 1916’.⁵¹

The roots of the poem stretch back, not just to the revelation of May that ‘terrible beauty has been born again’, but also to the quarrels with conventional nationalism which had convulsed the life of Dublin’s avant-garde in the rows over Synge’s plays, and to WBY’s own experience of hardline political attitudes in the ’98 centennial movement. All these conflicts and memories had been thrown into sharp relief by the transformation of his political and intellectual antagonists into the martyred heroes of Easter Week. The poem analyses the way that this has come about, but also the extent to which WBY’s own ambivalence about fanaticism had really been overcome. In its intellectual complexity, subtly modulated argument, and tightly controlled changes of mood and form, ‘Easter 1916’ reached a new level of achievement among WBY’s political poems: the ringing declamations of ‘To a Wealthy Man . . .’ and ‘September 1913’ have been replaced by something much closer to the dramatic dialogue of a meditation like ‘Ego Dominus Tuus’. Here, however, the dialogue is not only with, but within, the uncertain self. Transcending politics, it is also a last, elegiac love-lyric to Gonne. The poem circulated in samizdat form the following spring begins, in diminuendo mode, by conjuring up Dublin before the revolution; the city’s Georgian squares and terraces are inhabited by bureaucrats from the nationalist petite bourgeoisie, whose strict Sinn Féin platitudes seem bathetically ill attuned to the necessities of modern compromise – political and cultural – in a dwindled world.

I have met them at close of day
 Coming with vivid faces
 From counter or desk among grey
 Eighteenth-century houses,
 I have passed with a nod of the head
 Or polite meaningless words,
 Or have lingered awhile and said
 Polite meaningless words,
 And thought before I had done
 Of a mocking take or a gibe
 To please a companion
 Around the fire at the club,
 Being certain that they and I
 But lived where motley is worn:
 All changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.

The tone suggests expiation for having trivialized the subjects of the poem, before they had translated themselves into heroes. The second stanza

memorializes selected revolutionaries: oddly, the same four referred to in Lily's sardonic letter, but they are celebrated in a very different sense. At the same time he conveys a certain restraint, especially where Constance Markievicz is concerned:

That woman at while would be shrill
 In aimless argument;
 Had ignorant goodwill;
 All that she got she spent,
 Her charity had no bounds:
 Sweet voiced and beautiful,
 She had ridden well to hounds.

The version eventually published in the *New Statesman* was more graceful, inverting the last description into a classical Yeatsian rhetorical question; but the effect was hardly less impatient. Pearse and MacDonagh were more kindly treated:

This man had managed a school
 An[d] our wingèd mettlesome horse.
 This other his helper and friend
 Was coming into his force;
 He might have won fame in the end,
 So sensitive his nature seemed,
 So daring and sweet his thought.

But a real, and surprising, penance was done in the lines on MacBride, for so long seen by WBV as the betrayer of Gonne and molester of Iseult, both now 'near to his heart'.

This other man I had dreamed
 A drunken, vain-glorious lout.
 He had done most bitter wrong
 To some who are near my heart,
 Yet I number him in the song;
 He, too, has resigned his part
 In the casual comedy;
 He, too, has been changed in his turn,
 Transformed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.

Following a private logic, the introduction of Maud and Iseult leads into the third stanza, where the tone of memorial invocation suddenly yields to meditation.

Hearts with one purpose alone
 Through summer and winter, seem
 Enchanted to a stone
 To trouble the living stream.
 The horse that comes from the road,
 The rider, the birds that range
 From cloud to tumbling cloud,
 Minute by minute change.
 A shadow of cloud on the stream
 Changes minute by minute;
 A horse-hoof slides on the brim;
 And a horse plashes within it
 Where long-legged moor-hens dive
 And hens to moor-cocks call.
 Minute by minute they live:
 The stone's in the midst of all.

A year before, writing to Ernest Boyd, he had attacked 'Dublin talkers' who 'value anything which they call a principle more than any possible achievement. All achievements are won by compromise and these men wherever they find themselves expell from their own minds – by their mind's rigidity – the flowing & living world.'⁵² The image and the thought find their way into the poem, but the 'talkers' had now opted for action. Simultaneously this stanza reprises, yet again, his enduring plea to Gonne over the years. Most vividly, it recalls the great passage in 'J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time' six years before, also composed at Colleville, where he had written of the sterility that comes from giving oneself to an abstract idea of the nation: 'till minds, whose patriotism is perhaps great enough to carry them to the scaffold, cry down natural impulse with the morbid persistence of minds unsettled by some fixed idea'. In that essay he had argued for 'intellectual innocence, that delight in what is unforeseen, in the mere spectacle of the world, the mere drifting hither and thither, that must come before all true thought and emotion': now symbolized in 1916 as cloud-shadows on water, a rider splashing though a stream, the flux of life. Those who renounce the world 'no longer love, for only life is loved, and at last, a generation is like a hysterical woman who will make unmeasured accusations, and believe impossible things, because of some logical deduction from a solitary thought which has turned a portion of her mind to stone'.⁵³

In 1910 this had been implicitly addressed to Gonne; in 1916 she knew that the third stanza of 'Easter, 1916' was another appeal. Twenty-three years later, she recalled her guest working all night on the poem that Colleville summer.

Standing by the sea shore in Normandy in September 1916 he read me that poem, he had worked on it all the night before, and he implored me to forget the stone and its inner fire for the flashing, changing joy of life, but when he found my mind dull with the stone of the fixed idea of getting back to Ireland, kind and helpful as ever he helped me to overcome physical and passport difficulties and we travelled as far as London together.⁵⁴

But she must have noticed that his romantic attention had been deflected, and there are also less important inaccuracies and conflation here. He left Colleville before September, and the journey back together happened a year later. He finished the poem in Gregory's house, not Gonne's; the transformation of his own opinions about the Rising had been heavily influenced by Gregory. Above all, the appeal to share his life, and thus to embrace the living world rather than intellectual abstractions, had been directed most recently towards Gonne's daughter rather than to herself. Nonetheless she stands at the centre: all the more so, as the values of uncompromising, 'advanced', Anglophobic nationalism which she had always personified had been spectacularly embodied by the 1916 martyrs. And the last stanza of the poem took up the question of martyrology. While the names are 'told' at nightfall like the beads of a rosary, the poem subtly links the rebels' sacrifice to a life of dreams and delusion, and reminds the reader (now as then) that Home Rule had after all been passed into law, and the crisis over its implementation was still awaiting resolution.

Too long a sacrifice
 Can make a stone of the heart.
 O when may it suffice?
 That is heaven's part, our part
 To murmur name upon name,
 As a mother names her child
 When sleep at last has come
 On limbs that had run wild.
 What is it but nightfall?
 No, no, not night but death.
 Was it needless death after all?
 For England may keep faith
 For all she had done and said.
 We know their dream; enough
 To know they dreamed and are dead.
 And what if excess of love
 Bewildered them till they died?
 I write it out in a verse –
 MacDonagh and MacBride
 And Connolly and Pearse

Now and in time to be,
 Wherever green is worn,
 Are changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.⁵⁵

It was this last stanza which Gonne seized upon, in a magnificently defiant letter that November, when she had been sent the final version. ‘Your poem on the Easter week has been the cause of great argument in our household as to the nature and value of sacrifice,’ Iseult warned him. ‘Moura who cannot admit Art for art’s sake would willingly admit sacrifice for sacrifice’s sake, and I have come to admit neither exactly.’⁵⁶ But her mother’s certitude was uncompromising.

My dear Willie,

No I don’t like your poem, it isn’t worthy of you & above all it isn’t worthy of the subject – Though it reflects your present state of mind perhaps, it isn’t quite sincere enough for you who have studied philosophy & know something of history know quite well that sacrifice has never yet turned a heart to stone though it has immortalised many & through it alone mankind can rise to God – You recognise this in the line which was the original inspiration of your poem ‘A terrible Beauty is born’ but you let your present mood mar & confuse it till even some of the verses become unintelligible to many. Even Iseult reading it didn’t understand your thought till I explained your [retribution] theory of constant change & becoming in the flux of things –

But you could never say that MacDonagh & Pearse & Conally were sterile fixed minds, each served Ireland, which was their share of the world, the part they were in contact with, with varied faculties & vivid energy! those three were men of genius, with large comprehensive & speculative & active brains the others of whom we know less were probably less remarkable men, but still I think they must have been men with a stronger grasp on Reality a stronger spiritual life than most of those we meet. As for my husband he has entered Eternity by the great door of sacrifice which Christ opened & has therefore atoned for all so that praying for him I can also ask for his prayers & ‘A terrible beauty is born’

There are beautiful lines in your poem, as there are in all you write but it is not a great WHOLE, a living thing which our race would treasure & repeat, such as a poet like you might have given to your nation & which would have avenged our material failure by its spiritual beauty –

You will be angry perhaps that I write so frankly what I feel, but I am always frank with my friends & though our ideals are wide apart we are still friends.⁵⁷

She had unerringly spotted the poem’s central ambivalence, missed by those who concentrate on the images of terrible beauty and rebirth through sacrifice. Throughout the mounting rhetorical questions, WBY’s doubts about the utility of self-immolation and the dangers of fanaticism beat an insistent

rhythm. Nonetheless, in 1916 it would have read principally as a passionate endorsement of the rebels' cause, and wBY was extremely cautious about releasing it. Copies were sent to selected friends in the autumn (Gonne, Gregory, Ernest Boyd), and on 7 December he read it to a small group at Lindsey House, where Gregory was staying;⁵⁸ Gregory found it 'extraordinarily impressive', and had to read some Hilaire Belloc afterwards to lessen the tension. At some point that winter wBY drew up a contents page for his next *Cuala* volume, placing '1916' first, but he abandoned the idea, deciding instead on a private printing with Clement Shorter, to whom he sent a copy the following March. The delay, as he told Shorter, was at Gregory's request. She 'asked me not to send it you until we had finished our dispute with the authorities about the Lane pictures. She is afraid of it getting about & damaging us & she is not timid.'⁵⁹ This, indeed, seems the principal reason for discretion, though the conditions of the war also imposed a certain inhibition. On 10 September 1916 he wrote to Gregory that there had been a proposal to take away his pension, on the grounds that he was pro-German: 'Is it not a curious Russian state of things when one's private, or supposed private conversations, are reported to government . . . I am rather afraid I will find that the Dublin rising has brought suspicion on us all.' She replied wrathfully, telling him to go straight to Asquith.⁶⁰ It is likely that his support of Casement (hanged in August) was being held against him in some political circles; and a year later, in May 1917, wBY told Quinn that the forthcoming *Wild Swans at Coole* would be '24 or 25 lyrics or a little more if the war ending enables me to add two poems I have written about Easter week in Dublin'.⁶¹ But above all hovered the matter of Lane's contested bequest, which dominated Gregory's and wBY's London lives in the winter of 1916/17.

'There are no politics in the matter,' wBY wrote in a letter to the *Spectator* yet again setting forth the arguments for honouring Lane's unwitnessed codicil leaving his modern collection to Dublin.⁶² But in a private letter to Ellen Duncan in Dublin he directly contradicted this: since parliamentary action would be needed, 'it will certainly be a political matter': Lloyd George now had to be cultivated rather than Asquith, and the moment seized when he would take it up.⁶³ Since the débâcle of the Rising, Birrell (who had swiftly and inevitably resigned) lost influence. With Lloyd George's coup of December 1916, Asquith was also relegated. And, as Birrell warned Gregory, after Easter 1916 the National Gallery could count on 'the present unpopularity of Ireland & the Irish in both Houses of the country'.⁶⁴ Moreover, the matter of supporting the Easter Rising was all the more difficult, since the only government minister unequivocally in favour of Gregory's campaign happened to be the Unionist leader Edward Carson, who promised to work

on his Trinity College constituents; his Ulster colleague in the Unionist cause, James Craig, was equally committed.⁶⁵ But their support was unlikely to survive their ally's publication of a poem extolling the Easter Rising.

From late November, when WBY joined Gregory in London, they were engaged in a round of intrigue. WBY wooed Strachey of the *Spectator* and Robinson of *The Times*, setting up the publication of a 'statement' by Gregory. Meanwhile she laid siege to hostesses like Margot Asquith and Leonie Leslie, pursued Redmond to his gloomy Kensington flat, and bearded Lord Northcliffe. By January Birrell's successor as chief secretary, H. E. Duke, was being cultivated relentlessly. But by then the enemy were advancing into the open. The National Gallery would only hint at a loan arrangement covering part of the collection; WBY wrote angrily to *The Times* denouncing the idea. Robert Witt had now been identified as an arch-opponent.⁶⁶ The ex-viceroy Wimborne warned Gregory that the National Gallery was determined to fight; they disingenuously claimed the pictures were worth only £6,000, but rapidly put them on display. Most damaging of all, the distinguished critic D. S. MacColl, who had been retained to write Lane's life, revealed that he was in the National Gallery camp, arguing that the matter should be decided on the basis of Lane's opinions and wishes in 1914, not 1915. MacColl's letter to the *Observer* in mid-December was, WBY confided, the only salvo of importance fired against them; his own reply appeared on 21 December, and he also planted an interview in the paper, as well as writing copious letters to other journals. Though a Dublin committee was set up to agitate for the pictures' return, Gregory and WBY kept the operation in London firmly under their control. 'I am doing nothing but this dispute,' he gloomily told Duncan in January.⁶⁷

There were faint signs of hope in February, with T. P. O'Connor mediating approaches to other MPs; but WBY's visit to the House of Commons on 9 February to try to organize a committee of Irish Parliamentary Party members was a disappointment, and a note from Lloyd George's secretary, saying that the question of the pictures would be pursued, was scant comfort.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, all this unproductive lobbying and organization had a direct effect on WBY's work. In the 1917 printing of *Responsibilities*, for instance, two paragraphs about the struggle over Lane's gallery were dropped from the notes, at Gregory's request, and he threw himself into composing a pamphlet stating the case. Though nominally under Gregory's name, it was largely written by WBY.⁶⁹ Above all, this level and intensity of political wire-pulling required tact, discretion, and an avoidance of controversy. Little wonder that 'Easter 1916' was withheld from both the Cuala and Macmillan versions of *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917 and 1919 respectively) and stayed out of public circulation until its publication in the

New Statesman on 23 October 1920 – when the political situation in Ireland, and Anglo-Irish relations with it, had changed more utterly than anyone could have foreseen.

III

Through the summer at Colleville WBY had been writing hard: not only 'Easter 1916' and drafts of other poems, and 'patching' *The Player Queen*, but the next instalment of his memoirs. He arrived determined to get them down on paper, and by 1 August had written more than half. They were not, however, for immediate publication, as he made clear to Quinn.

It will be published 20 years after my death & I hope to find some public institution – T.C.D. library perhaps – to take charge of it till then. It is my life from the close of 'reveries' to about 1900. I am using Maud Gonne's memory as well as my own. It is perfectly frank & containing besides my own life studies of Henley, Symons, Wilde, Maud Gonne of course & of all the little group in Dublin.

The same message went to Farr: 'Do you want to go in over a non-de-plume or not? It is a very candid book & will be quite unpublishable unless the world grows more free spoken.' He stressed his wish for complete psychological honesty. 'I will lay many ghosts, or rather I will purify my own imagination by setting the past in order.'⁷⁰ He read instalments aloud to the Colleville household as the work progressed – Iseult being 'interested & impressed', while Gonne objected to much that he said about Dublin. This was hardly surprising: 'it is so far almost as much a study of Maud Gonne as of myself'.

Thus he was writing about the first agonies of his youthful love for her, and his repeated proposals, at the very time when – both past fifty – he was proposing to her all over again. The draft ended, in fact, with his exhausted inability to pursue her further, after the traumatic revelations of December 1898. It was indeed published posthumously in 1972, as *Memoirs*, and it is frank and direct on some sexual matters: he was now acquainted with the ideas of Freud and Jung, and wrote about his first experiences of sexual arousal and masturbation 'that some young man of talent might not think as I did that my shame was mine alone.'⁷¹ But, as with all his autobiographical writing, it is also a masterpiece of reordering and manipulation: 'getting in all the characters is rather like writing a play', he told Quinn. He was determined to choreograph his varied acquaintances of the 1880s and 1890s against the backdrop of their times, and write his own history of the literary revival along with it, to rival or dispute those of W. P. Ryan and Boyd. The sexual frankness forbade publication of the most personal passages: he

R. F. FOSTER

W. B. YEATS

A LIFE



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Chapter 2 : SHADES AND ANGELS
1916-1917

1. *New Statesman*, 15 Apr. 1916. The favoured charity was the Star and Garter Fund.
2. AG to WBY, 11 July [1915], Berg, and 'Thursday 22' [also 1915], Stony Brook, L.2.D, Box 61.
3. See AG to WBY, n.d. [but 1915-16], Stony Brook, L.2.D, Box 61; WBY to AG, 19 Nov. and 20 Dec. 1915, Berg.
4. Wedderburn visitor-book, HRHRC.
5. Desmond Ryan, quoted in Monk Gibbon, 'Murder in Portobello Barracks', *Dublin Magazine*, 5, 1 (Spring, 1966), 14.
6. 22 May 1916, NYPL.
7. To Lennox Robinson, 7 Jan. 1915, SIUC; to AG, 2 May 1915, Berg.
8. See James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats and Modernism* (Oxford, 1988), 256, and Pound to Quinn, 1 May 1916, NYPL.
9. n.d., [but annotated by ECY 'I got this some days ago on May 1'], Yeats Collection, Princeton.
10. 8 May [1916], HRHRC.
11. Charles Ricketts, *Self-Portrait* (London, 1939), compiled by T. S. Moore and edited by C. S. Lewis, 256. Ricketts later annotated this diary entry: 'P.S. I was an idiot.' The 'strange Irish impartiality' comment is in the unpublished version, BL Add. MSS 58107: my thanks to Deirdre Toomey. Compare SMY to JBY, quoted in JBY to Eulalee Dix Becker [copy], 30 May 1916, Yeats Collection, Princeton: 'Lincoln would have kept them in prison under a suspended sentence & then let them go - to wear out the rest of their days in penitential reflection on the misery they caused -'
12. Both these letters are in Berg, with excisions by the wartime censor.
13. 13 May [1916], Berg.

14. 14 May [1916], Berg. For the Shelley reference, see 'On the Punishment of Death', reprinted in D. L. Clark (ed.), *Shelley's Prose: or, The Trumpet of a Prophecy* (1954; new ed., London, 1988), 156.
15. 23 May 1916, Berg.
16. To WBY, 27 May [1916], Berg.
17. Martyn to AG, 19 May 1916, Berg.
18. To JBY, 7 May 1916, transcription by William M. Murphy.
19. To R L-P, n.d., and 16 May 1916, transcription by William M. Murphy.
20. Pound to Alice Corbin Henderson, 3 May 1916, in Ira B. Nadel (ed.), *The Letters of Ezra Pound to Alice Corbin Henderson* (Austin, Texas, 1993), 133; Pound to Quinn, received 13 June 1916, NYPL.
21. To Ernest Boyd, 29 May 1916, Healy.
22. SMY to R L-P, 16 May 1916, transcription by William M. Murphy; ECY to James F. Drake, 13 June 1916, HRHRC; AE to Quinn, 30 Nov. 1916, NYPL.
23. *Nationality*, 29 Jan. 1916; see above, p. 28.
24. BL Add. MSS 58107: my thanks to Deirdre Toomey.
25. WBY to Mrs Beardsley, 10 May 1916, Beardsley Collection, Princeton.
26. 11 May 1916, Berg, and *L*, 612–14.
27. See esp. WBY to Quinn, 23 May 1916, NYPL.
28. See AG to WBY, 'Tuesday 6th' [1915–16], Stony Brook, I.2.D, Box 61; WBY to Eva Gore-Booth, 23 July 1916, *Review of English Literature*, 4 (July, 1963), 24–5; Brian Inglis, *Roger Casement* (London, 1973), 386. JBY 'spent a day [in 1915] with Sir Roger Casement – Quinn tried to convince poor Sir Roger that his ideas were madness.' To Eulalee Dix Becker, 30 May 1916 (copy), Princeton. A copy of WBY's letter to Asquith is in NLI MS 10,564, dated 14 July 1916 ('the evil has been done, it cannot be undone, but it need not be aggravated weeks afterwards with every circumstance of deliberation'). According to Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party 1916–1923* (Cambridge, 1995), it is not to be found in the Asquith papers. Ethel Mannin later claimed WBY told her 'he only gave his signature to the appeal for the reprieve of Casement to please Maud Gonne, who nagged him into it': lecture notes for speech at Sligo, Mannin Papers, Boston University.
29. 23 July 1916, *Review of English Literature*, 4 (July 1963), 24–5.
30. Ronald Schuchard, "An Attendant Lord": H. W. Nevinson's Friendship with W. B. Yeats, *YA* 7 (1990), 117.
31. AG to WBY, 25 May 1916, Berg. The letter to Quinn about getting into the country, partly in *L*, 614, is in NYPL.
32. *FJ*, 30 May 1916; Bailey to WBY, 9 June 1916, Berg; AG to WBY, 8 July 1916, Berg, telling him 'we can't let the Abbey die on the verge of Home Rule or let it die at all after all the work we have put into it'. There is an account of the players' revolt in Dawson Byrne, *The Story of Ireland's National Theatre* (Dublin, 1929), 106 ff., which sounds first-hand. Also see AG to Quinn, 8 July and 26 Aug. 1916, Berg. The cocksure description is in SMY to R L-P, 29 May 1939.
33. Pound's explosive letters, which also show the part played by WBY, are in Berkeley. Also see Longenbach, *Stone Cottage*, 252–3.
34. 11 June 1916, NYPL. The visit lasted 2–8 June.
35. See *AM*, 359–67.
36. AG to WBY, 'Thursday 25' [May 1916], and 9 June [1916], Berg.
37. White vellum notebook, kept from 1908, MBY.
38. 19 Aug. [1916], private collection.
39. To Tagore, 31 July 1915, Visra-Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal.

NOTES TO PAGES 55-65

40. IG to WBY, 25 Aug. 1915, Jeffares, White and Bridgwater.
41. See *YA* 7 (1990), 118; George Mills Harper, *W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton: The Record of an Occult Friendship* (London, 1980), 88 ff.; Nancy Cardozo, *Lucky Eyes and a High Heart: The Life of Maud Gonne* (New York, 1978), 310.
42. *G-YL*, 378.
43. 3 July 1916, Berg.
44. WBY to MG, *G-YL*, 378; AG to WBY, 8 July [1916], Berg.
45. 2 Oct. 1916, Jeffares, White and Bridgwater.
46. 14 Aug. 1916, Berg.
47. 20 Aug. 1916, Berg.
48. Pound to Quinn, 31 Aug. 1916, NYPL, reports a wire from WBY to expect him in London that evening. WBY wrote to SMY on 15 Sept., announcing his arrival that morning, and his imminent departure: on the 17th Gogarty reported to Starkie that he had seen WBY and AG on Grafton Street two days before.
49. 2 Oct. 1916, Jeffares, White and Bridgwater.
50. 15 Oct. 1916, Jeffares, White and Bridgwater.
51. The comma was later dropped, but I am quoting the poem in the version printed by Clement Shorter and preserved (in carbon) in NLI MS 30,216. A TS copy at Huntington with WBY's corrections has the Markievicz passage as given here.
52. 20 Jan. 1915, private collection. The notion of dedication to an ideal, pitched against the claims of life, had come up in his conversation with Ricketts, and also in the autobiographical reflection eventually published as *Memoirs*, where the image of stoniness is repeatedly associated with MG.
53. See *AM*, 417-21, for a full discussion.
54. Maud Gonne, 'An Account of Yeats', 1939, HRHRC: reprinted in Stephen Gwynn (ed.), *Scattering Branches: Tributes to the Memory of W. B. Yeats* (London, 1940).
55. As in NLI MS 30,216. The substitution of Connolly for Markievicz at the end is interesting. There is an obvious reason in that he was executed and she was not, but his later poems on her verge on the denunciatory, and he was probably unwilling to apostrophize her here. The line 'wherever green is worn' is an indirect invocation of the famous rebel ballad 'The Wearing of the Green': compare his use of 'The Green above the Red' in 'September 1913' (*AM*, 496).
56. 15 Oct. 1916, Jeffares, White and Bridgwater.
57. 8 Nov. 1916, *G Y-L*, 384-5.
58. *Journals*, i, 20.
59. 28 Mar. [1917], Berg.
60. See Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism* (London, 1981), 98 (quoting from a transcript of Richard Ellmann's), and AG to WBY, 12 Sept. [1916], Berg.
61. 16 May 1917, NYPL.
62. 27 Dec. 1916.
63. See WBY to Ellen Duncan, 19 Jan. 1917, and to AG, 20 Jan. 1917, Berg.
64. 18 Nov. 1916, Berg.
65. See W. F. Bailey to AG, 6 Nov. 1916, Berg, for their readiness to back a bill in the Lords; also numerous references to AG's journals and letters.
66. See a letter from AE to *The Times*, 14 Dec. 1916, denouncing him: AE was deeply committed to the Lane Gallery as a necessary decentralization of artistic resources.
67. WBY to Ellen Duncan, 17 Dec. 1916 and 19 Jan. 1917, Gilvarry Collection (sold at Christie's, New York, 7 Feb. 1986). The *Observer* interview is reprinted in *UP*, ii, 418-19. There were also letters to *The Times* dated 11 Dec. 1916, and to the *Morning Post*, 18 Dec. 1916.
68. See WBY to AG, 10 and 24 Feb. 1917, Berg.

69. See WBY to AG, 29 Jan. 1917, Berg, and 12 Mar. 1917, *ibid.*, accompanying proofs, which clearly show his authorship. The pamphlet, called *Sir Hugh Lane's French Pictures*, was printed at the Chiswick Press in 1917.
70. WBY to Quinn, 1 Aug. [1916], NYPL, and to Farr, 19 Aug. 1916, private collection: true to form, she did not mind at all.
71. W. B. Yeats, *Memoirs. Autobiography—First Draft, Journal*, edited by Denis Donoghue (London, 1972): in these notes, *Mem.* Also see James Olney, *The Rhizome and the Flower. The Perennial Philosophy—Yeats and Jung* (London, 1980), especially 6. Olney, however, did not know the MS passage quoted below, which specifically mentions Jung. WBY's library contained a 1916 edition of Jung's *Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology*.
72. WBY to Quinn, 16 Aug. 1916, NYPL.
73. According to a letter to Farr of that date, private collection.
74. 9 Nov. 1916, Jeffares, White and Bridgewater.
75. Pound to Quinn, 3 Sept. 1916, NYPL; Moore to Eglinton, 28 Aug. 1919, John Eglinton (ed.), *Letters of George Moore* (Bournemouth, n.d.).
76. To Macmillan, 14 Sept. 1916, BL Add. MSS 55003.
77. For letter to SMY, see NLI MS 3255. The poem is simply called 'In Memory', and is postmarked from France, 24 Aug. 1916. It was printed in the *Little Review*, June 1917.
78. AG to WBY, 5 Nov. 1917, Berg.
79. See WBY to Troubridge, 3 and 13 Dec. 1916, 2 and 31 Jan. 1917, Lovat Dickson Papers, National Archives of Canada, Toronto.
80. Schuchard, "An Attendant Lord", 119-20.
81. As reported by SMY. 'They want women badly in the company. They are so plain, the present lot, plain and poor in type, rather the stage-struck type Willy was so anxious to keep out of the Abbey—little chorus girl types. The Allgoods have character. Sally has a kind of richness of character, Molly has character, not very deep.' (To R L-P, 7 Jan. 1917).
82. This passage continues:
- That is why we poets pass on age after age an artificial language, inherited from the first poets, and always full of reminiscent symbols, which grow, richer in association every time, they are used, for new emotions. In primitive communities, where men are not yet crowded together, and so are able to find time when they speak to express emotion as well as describe facts in real language fit for the use of a great artist. Yet even Synge concentrated, and enriches the language he found in Arran, or in the Blaskets, and in the one play where he expresses his vision, without its antagonist the grotesque, he throws the events backward in time that he might obtain a more powerful phantasmagoria.
- I am following the transcription of David R. Clark, who has printed 'The Poet and the Actress' in *YA* 8 (1991), 123-45.
83. See Steve L. Adams and George Mills Harper (eds.), 'The Manuscript of Leo Africanus', *YA* 1 (1982), 3-47. The date of composition, left conjectural by Adams and Harper, is fixed as Dec. 1916 by WBY's correspondence with Alick Schepeler (Huntington). For the background to WBY's association with Leo Africanus, see *AM*, 464-6. WBY believed that his 'guide' had possibly first made contact in 1898-9, but the major connection was established in 1912.
84. *YA* 1, 13.
85. *ibid.*, 26-7.
86. *ibid.*, 28. Some of this passage is reused in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (*Myth*, 332). Adams and Harper believe it originated from a script of Elizabeth Radcliffe's.
87. *ibid.*, 22.
88. See WBY to Harriet Monroe, 21 July 1917, *Poetry* Archive, University of Chicago; WBY